

PAHAYAGAN NG PARTIDO KOMUNISTA NG PILIPINAS  
PINAPATNUBAYAN NG  
MARXISMO-LENINISMO-MAOISMO

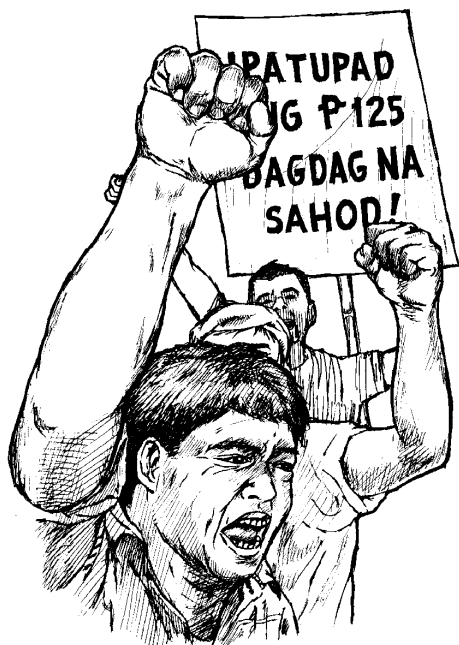
# Bayan

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Advance the  
struggle for  
a P125-  
increase in  
the workers'  
daily wage!



The demand of the masses of Filipino workers for a nationwide, across-the-board P125-wage increase is entirely just. It is correct for workers to stand firm and militantly fight for it. Because of its justness, it enjoys the broad support of the various democratic sectors.

The workers' struggle for a wage increase is a major political challenge to the Macapagal-Arroyo regime. If the regime denies the workers' demand for a P125-hike in their daily wage, its rapid isolation from the people stands imminent.

THE WORKERS' MEASLY WAGE CAN no longer cope with the spiraling prices of prime commodities.

Just this month, oil companies raised the prices of petroleum products by more than 80 centavos per liter. The oil price hike is one of the biggest factors in the rising prices of prime commodities. According to the government's own statistics, prices have been rising by about 7% every month since May.

A research conducted by the

National Wages and Productivity Commission, a government agency, has itself shown that a family of six must earn P509 a day to address its basic needs. Thus, the minimum wage of P250 (in Metro Manila) is definitely not enough.

All things considered, the increase demanded by workers will only partially recover their wages' previous value. The Kilusang Mayo Uno estimates that in mid-1999, the peso had plunged 30% from its 1994 value. Since then, the cost of living had risen by more than 87.3%. Thus, the attainment of the demanded 50% increase in workers' wages will put their wages still far below the amount needed for them to recover the big chunk already lost from their earnings.

FILIPINO WORKERS BEGAN struggling for a P125 nationwide across-the-board wage increase as far back as 1998. The struggle was launched amid the rapid deterioration of their livelihood and increase in prices. It was prodded by the severe blow wrought by the social crisis on wages and the social status of workers. The Philippine economy plummeted, marked by

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## ANG BAYAN ON THE INTERNET

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a steep fall and bottoming out of the peso's value in the market, a slowdown in foreign trade and local production, increased unemployment and hikes in the prices of commodities.

These past years, the workers' demand for a wage increase has become the main content of strikes and street rallies. The correctness of this demand has been recognized, embraced by the broad ranks of workers and supported by various sectors. In the year 2000, a bill providing for a P125 wage increase was filed but has since been stymied.

Despite the utterly clear and immediate need for a substantial wage increase nationwide, the reactionary government has not undertaken any positive step to address it.

In previous years, orders for insignificant wage increases had merely rubbed salt on the workers' wounds. The accumulated wage increases since 1997 amount to only P69 daily, which is not even enough to cope with the rise in prices of the past years. The gap between the minimum wage, which has been lagging behind, and the rapidly rising cost of living decently, has grown ever wider and now exceeds P292.

The Macapagal-Arroyo regime has been offering crumbs instead, such as the proposed Emergency Cost of Living Allowance (ECOLA) and another proposal to reduce taxes. These are but tiny amounts and stop-gap measures. In fact, businessmen were merely asked to advance the ECOLA. Workers are supposed to give it up once they receive an increase in wages or allowances. Tax deductions, on the other hand, provide such a minuscule advantage and will be recouped by government through budget cuts for social services. Tax deductions, moreover, are not applicable to workers receiving the minimum wage.

Thwarting significant wage increases for workers is being rationalized through rabidly pro-imperialist and antiworker theories and arguments. The most mendacious among them states that wage increases are antiworker because these would supposedly lead to commodity price increases, the collapse of enterprises and rising unemployment and worsen the economic crisis.

The neocolonial policy of cheap labor is the main tactical question being confronted at present by the masses of Filipino workers. This is one of the basic characteristics of the current semicolonial social system that continues to be advanced by the present regime. The all-out struggle of workers for higher wages must be integrated with the struggle against the cheap labor policy that is dictated by the IMF-World Bank and in accord with "globalization", liberalization, deregulation and denationalization.

THE WORKERS' SENTIMENTS ARE AFLAME IN THE FACE OF THE REGIME'S oft-repeated statements that workers must endure austerity measures even as it allows capitalists to gorge themselves with profit. This is also in the face of a situation where leaders and officials of government agencies and public corporations receive millions of pesos in salaries while workers' wages are pegged at very low levels. ►

# Brazen plunder of the nation's coffers

The government continues to deny the workers' urgent demand for a P125-increase in their daily wage.

The government also continues to deny the urgent demand of rank-and-file government employees for a P3,000-increase in their monthly salary. The lowest-ranking employee receives only P4,000-P5,000 monthly. This is equivalent to only P133-P167 daily. The measly 5% increase in their salaries recently legislated by the Macapagal-Arroyo regime is a grave insult. This is equivalent to less than P7 daily—and not even enough to buy a can of sardines.

On the other hand, high-ranking government officials scandalously indulge themselves, receiving hundreds of thousands up to millions annually in salaries alone. In addition, they receive other benefits, like gasoline and representation allowances, per diems for travel and others, not to mention what they steal from the nation's coffers through various means.

A case in point is Winston Garcia, general manager of GSIS, the insurance agency for government employees. He receives P6.5 million annually. His basic salary amounts to

P4,283,748 and his total compensation including benefits amounts to P2.3 million. His benefits include a P723,958 bonus; P382,444 in RATA (representation allowances); a provident fund of P1 million; P21,000 for food; and P15,000 in medical benefits.

Recorded as having the biggest take-home pay (P10.9 million per year) as Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office chair is Ma. Livia "Honey Girl" Singson-de Leon. Her annual basic salary amounts to P440,000 and part of her "compensation and benefits" are a P5-million intelligence fund and P4.7 million in discretionary funds. Neither of these funds is subject to audit. Aside from this, she receives P90,000 in goodwill money or "balato" for every sweepstakes draw. These are gifts from the Macapagal-Arroyo regime to Luis "Chavit" Singson, de Leon's brother, for his role in having exposed the Estrada regime's corruption and links to jueteng and having initiated the process that led to Macapagal-Arroyo's takeover from Estrada.

Others on record as having the highest salaries are the president of the Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. (P7.3 million) and the vice-presidents of GSIS (P5.8 million) and SSS (P4.9 million). ►

Year	Mandated increases in minimum wage	Minimum Wage (NCR)	Daily Cost of Living	*Gap
1997	P7	P188.00	P393.63	P236.70
1998	P10	P198.00	P437.21	P262.61
1999	P25.50	P223.50	P460.36	P266.66
2000	P26.50	P250.00	P509.00	P292.33

*\*Calculations based on 26 working days per month and expenses for 30 days*

◀ Filipino workers must persevere in advancing their demands for a P125-increase in their daily wage in order to block the rapid deterioration in the quality of life of workers and their families. More than this, the continued advance and strengthening of the workers' struggle will serve to consolidate their political and social status and strengthen their capability to advance the struggles of the people and those of their own class.

A bill providing for a P125-increase in the daily wage is set to be filed in Congress. Newly elected Cong. Crispin Beltran, Kilusang Mayo Uno chair and Bayan Muna leader, will be filing the bill. This must be thoroughly supported. The abolition of the law that set up the Regional Wage and Productivity Boards must be likewise be supported, since these are being used to divide the workers, diffuse and weaken their struggle and depress

their wages.

The more important factor in attaining victory in this struggle is the establishment of the broadest possible unity among workers along with their perseverance on the road of militant struggle. Any gain attained by the workers, more than anything else, relies on the broadness and intensity of their struggles in the country's factories and streets. Also extremely valuable is the broad support of other progressive sectors and democratic classes in society.

It is the Party and the revolutionary forces' responsibility to raise the levels of consciousness and militancy of workers for them to persevere in the struggle against slave wages and integrate this struggle with the overall struggle in unity with the democratic sectors and classes to smash the oppressive semicolonial and semifeudal social system and pave the way towards full class and people's liberation from exploitation and oppression. **AB**

◀ With the issue of “millionaires” among government leaders becoming the focus of attention, a list of these “millionaires” within the bureaucracy has recently been made public. The Macapagal-Arroyo regime wants to make it appear that it is in the process of changing this practice. The regime warned the officials on the list to reduce their salaries or resign. On the roster were heads of public corporations and institutions receiving P691,670 to P10 million annually.

But this is all hot air on the part of Macapagal-Arroyo to improve her image before the public and cover up the big salaries, even bigger privileges and ever present corruption of government officials, especially those in high positions.

The government pretends to condemn the very high salaries received by these officials. Macapagal-Arroyo even plays the victim by saying that her basic pay is much less than what other government executives have been raking in. But it is the reactionary law itself that grants these officials the license to set such high salaries and benefits for themselves. Fourteen of the 72 public corporations are exempted from coverage by the Salary Standardization Law, the very law that pegs the salaries of all employees at all levels.

These corporations include the Bases Conversion Development Authority, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, GSIS, SSS, Home Guaranty Corp., Land Bank of the Philippines, Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., Philippine Health Insurance Corp. Development Bank of the Philippines, Philippine Postal Corp., National Manpower Corp., Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

Aside from executives of government corporations, senators and congressmen rake in huge amounts from their pork barrels, kickbacks from contracts and many other means. Cabinet members, political appointees of Macapagal-Arroyo and other bureaucrats assigned to the board of directors of government corporations likewise receive huge allowances and benefits that are far bigger than their salaries. **AB**

# The party list elections and the correct role of progressives within the reactionary parliament



The participation and victory of a number of progressive forces in the recent electoral struggle have opened up an additional arena for airing the people’s national-democratic interests and advancing mass struggles.

Although progressives have achieved some significant gains in the recent party list elections (and in winning a few low-ranking local positions), reactionaries continue to enjoy decisive dominance over elections for the senate, district representatives, governor, mayor and other positions in local government.

The party list system purportedly aims to provide representation in congress to marginalized sectors of the people. Towards this end, 20% of congressional seats are allotted to representatives of elected parties.

In actuality, the party list system is an added instrument of the ruling class to coopt leaders and progressive organizations to become ensnared in parliamentarism, share in the corruption and privileges accorded by the reactionary system and abandon their stand for genuine social change.

Despite the measly 20% reserved for marginalized sectors, corrupt politicians and parties representing the reactionary ruling class nonetheless tried to grab it for themselves by fielding their own errand boys in the party list elections. Many participants in the party list elections in May were of this sort. Among them were those supported and funded by the state (MAD, VFB, COCOFED, APEC, NATCO-COOP), big political parties of the ruling classes (Lakas-NUCD, NPC, PMP, LDP, LP, Promdi, Aksyon Demokratiko, True Marcos Loyalists, Osmeña), big business (CREBA) and big religious sects (CIBAC, BUHAY). A number of them (MAD, VFP, Lakas-NUCD, NPC, APEC and CIBAC) dominated the party list elections. Progressive organizations and the democratic mass movement vigorously objected and successfully blocked them from taking seats in congress reserved for party list representatives. This was achieved through mass actions and the tactic of filing

a case in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court clarified that only parties and organizations that genuinely represented marginalized sectors of the people were qualified to join the party list elections. The COMELEC was obliged to accredit only three so far—Bayan Muna, Akbayan and Butil—among those that actually garnered 2% or more of the total party list votes cast.

Progressives and genuine representatives of marginalized sectors are minuscule in number compared to the more than 200 representatives of the reactionary ruling classes in congress. Worse, only about a dozen of the 52 seats reserved for party list representatives have been filled up in the last two party list elections.

In any case, the reactionaries failed to thwart the people's strong support for and the unequivocal victory of, Bayan Muna, a progressive party. This, despite brazen poll fraud, harassment and vote buying by reactionary organizations who ran in the party list elections. Through its more than 1.7 million votes, Bayan Muna posted a big lead over other party list candidates, including extensions of corrupt politicians and their political parties, others who outrightly embodied the interests of the reactionary ruling class, pseudo-revolutionary parties and reformist groups. This meant that three representatives of Bayan Muna would take their seats in congress.

The public is still largely unaware of the party list. Not even half of those who voted in the recent polls voted in the party list elections. The big number of votes garnered by Bayan Muna mainly came from its wide base among the toiling masses and support from the middle forces who participated in and advanced EDSA

2. Through its well-conducted alliance work, it was able to raise added resources, broaden its linkages in provinces, districts, municipalities and cities, gain additional votes and thwart poll fraud. Other candidates garnered far fewer votes, except for MAD.

Although they have also been able to win party list seats, the narrow organizational base and influence on the people of Anakbayan and Sanlakas and other pseudo-revolutionary organiza-

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tions have also become manifest.

In the case of Sanlakas, it has been isolated from the mainstream of the anti-Estrada movement as far back as the latter part of 2000, with its advancement of its "Resign All" slogan. AMIN, another pseudo-revolutionary organization in Mindanao, bought votes but failed to attain the requisite 2%.

DESPITE THE VICTORIES OF PROGRESSIVE forces in the electoral arena, strengthening the mass movement both in the cities and countryside remains the key to advancing the people's democratic demands. Advances in electoral and parliamentary struggle are part of the overall advance and strengthening of the progressive and revolutionary forces. It is our objective to accelerate and comprehensively advance and strengthen all parallel arenas of revolutionary struggle.

The actions within parliament of representatives of the progressive and

democratic mass movement and the people should not be divorced from the mass movement. They can only be effective representatives of the people within the reactionary parliament if they maintain tight relations with the democratic mass movement outside. They must remain focused on the agenda of the people and the mass movement even as they utilize the methods of parliament.

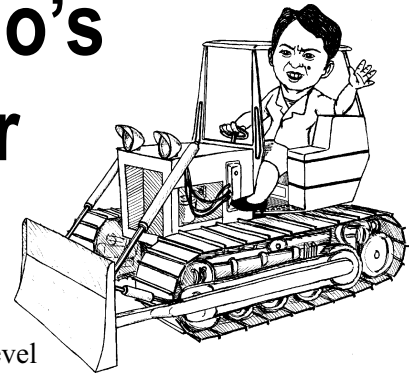
It is the primary task of progressive forces within parliament to expose the reactionary congress and the reactionary state in general by advancing people's issues and struggles against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. They must not be used to deodorize or redeem the decadent and moribund system.

It is also an important task for them to be alert to, and vigorously resist, the temptations of parliamentarism and the corrupt political system.

There are clear limitations to, and boundaries in, what the progressive forces can do within parliament. Because congress is a parliament of reaction and reactionaries, it will not pass laws that would be detrimental to the basic interests and continued class dominance of the reactionary ruling classes. Nonetheless, progressives within congress, in cooperation with mass actions outside the latter, must thoroughly fight for the passage of laws and programs that would provide the people even a modicum of relief. They must serve as the voice of the oppressed people resisting the deterioration of their livelihoods and the trampling of their democratic rights.

State suppression of progressive forces is also a glaring reality. The continued escalation of the armed conflict between the revolutionary forces and the state's armed forces and the ►

# The realities behind “Ate Glo’s concern” for the urban poor



**M**acapagal-Arroyo has deodorized herself as “Ate Glo” who is supposedly full of concern for the poor, challenged as she was by the fact that throngs of pro-Estrada forces were paid and deceived to be mobilized for the so-called EDSA 3 and the May 1 attack on Malacañang. She has thus issued a token directive granting titles to lands in urban poor communities in Metro Manila and Mindanao. At the same time, Macapagal-Arroyo boasted about her pledges regarding housing, livelihood projects and other services for the impoverished in her so-called “consultations with the poor”.

BEHIND THIS, HOWEVER, THE MACAPAGAL-ARROYO REGIME HAS been conducting large-scale demolitions in urban poor communities. In a very short span of time, more than 18,000 families had lost their houses. A partial list of the areas targeted includes Malabon, Balintawak and Tondo in Metro Manila. It was the housing agencies themselves that ordered the demolitions. Police and hired goons indiscriminately perpetrated violations of human rights against the poor. It would not be farfetched to say that Macapagal-Arroyo would likely

surpass the ousted regime’s record for the year 2000 in terms of the number of victims and the level of violence in demolitions.

**July 12:** Up to 50 urban poor residents were injured in a violent demolition in Malabon. A man and three women, one of them pregnant, were arrested by the police. Those arrested were among the residents who resisted the attempts of the demolition team and elements of PNP Substation 2 led by Chief Supt. Pablo Aquino to raze hundreds of houses within the allegedly private Gozon Compound along Letre Road, Barangay Tonsuya.

**June 28:** Armed policemen and demolition team members tore down the houses of about 500 families in Barangay Catmon, Malabon. The residents had for some time been paying P300 a month to the title holder of the land they had been occupying. The local government did not even offer them a temporary place to stay, contrary to pro- ►

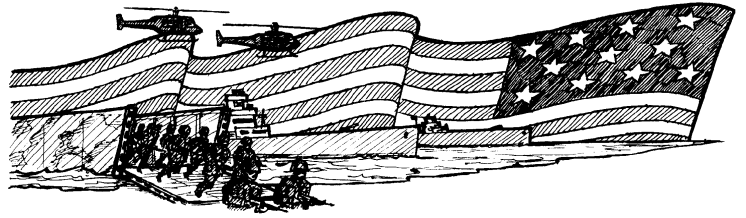
◀ unrelenting intensification of the crisis gripping the reactionary ruling system are further pushing the enemy to tighten its surveillance and intensify its harassment and attacks against progressive political parties and the revolutionary mass movement. Even now, the reactionaries are relentlessly maligning and harassing Bayan Muna. AFP propagandists and psywar experts have been insinuating that Bayan Muna is allegedly a mere front of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Newspapers have also reported that the US’ local henchmen have already fielded hit squads that would target leaders of the open democratic movement, including the party list representatives.

Progressives have a very small niche. The same goes for what they

have been able to achieve in the electoral and parliamentary struggle. Reactionary elections are a political arena tightly controlled by the reactionary ruling classes. They are characterized by the widespread and absolute reliance of reactionary politicians and parties on violence, money, deception and fraud to win. In the face of all this, the effort and success of some progressives to win seats in the reactionary parliament manifest a level of capability among the revolutionary and democratic forces to likewise use the enemy’s instruments and arena against him and to attain benefits for the movement and the people. It has been demonstrated that these victories may be surpassed in the future, along with the further advance of armed struggle and the mass movement.

On the other hand, the reactionary elections and parliament cannot be decisively used by the revolutionary forces and people to seize political power and obtain fundamental changes for the people’s welfare. Armed revolution remains the only means for the revolutionary movement and the people to overthrow the reactionary and corrupt ruling system. Armed struggle and the mass movement are essential and more primary compared to electoral and parliamentary struggle. Along with such efforts and victories in electoral and parliamentary struggle, it is likewise necessary to further clarify to the people the undeniable need to advance armed struggle and expand and deepen the revolutionary mass movement in the cities and countryside. **AB**

# US adamant in using the country as a military base



US imperialism is once again pushing for the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), a wide-ranging accord that shall allow US military forces to freely come in and make use of any facility anywhere in the country whenever they want. This was admitted by no less than US Pacific Command chief Adm. Dennis Blair.

The Filipino people and even some reactionaries have junked agreements of this sort several times in the past. It will be recalled that as early as 1992, after the Philippines kicked out the military bases, US military officials immediately pushed for the ACSA. But due to ardent sentiments against its military bases, the US saw it fit to refrain from insisting on the agreement. In its stead, it signed an access agreement through the Mutual Defense Board, a committee composed of representatives from the Philippine

and US military supervising the implementation of the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951. Through this access agreement, US forces were allowed to use Philippine airports and seaports and conduct small-scale military exercises in the country.

In 1994, the US intended to expand the range of the access agreement through an accord like ACSA. Based on the draft agreement, the Philippine military would be obliged to provide “logistics, supply and service support” to US military forces. Likewise, the US military would provide counterpart services to Philippine military forces. “Logistics, supply and service support” include the following: food, accommodations, transportation, petroleum, oil, lubricants, clothing, communication services, medical services, ammunition, base support (and related construction work), storage services, training services, components and spare

parts, repair and maintenance services and air- and seaport services. These are exactly the same services and support provided in the past by the Philippines inside the US military bases in the country. In reality, this type of agreement will pave the way for flexible basing by US troops in the country. It would thus be correct to state that the agreement would transform the entire Philippines into a US military base.

In addition, the agreement stipulates that the Philippines would be obliged to support US imperialism in “any situation where one party would require logistics, supply and service support”. This buttresses the provisions of the MDT that automatically involve the Philippines in any war waged by or involving US imperialism, especially in the Asia-Pacific and

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◀ visions of the reactionary system’s own laws.

**June 19:** A demolition team from the National Housing Authority itself along with policemen razed houses in Smokey Mountain in Barrio Madaragat, Balic-Balic, Tondo. They harassed, beat up, jailed and even robbed the residents who resisted.

**March 5 and 9:** Troops from the Task Force Control, Prevention and Removal of Illegal Structures and Squatting demolished houses along Old Samson Road, Balintawak, Quezon City. Five children died of measles after being deprived of shelter.

IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, AMONG THEM women and children, were brutalized by elements of the Philippine Army, Marines and SWAT-PNP in urban poor

communities in Manila, Malabon, Navotas and Caloocan in the early part of May. Residents were cordoned in, attacked, terrorized and illegally arrested by the troopers. These measures were conducted side by side with pursuit operations against pro-Estrada forces who joined the May 1 attack on Malacañang.

The hungry bellies of the toiling masses can never be filled by any amount of courtship or deception by any reactionary posing as their champion without resolving the roots of their poverty. It is the entirety of the semicolonial and semifeudal system in the country that is the reason behind the existence of millions of urban poor and their continually growing number. Only its overthrow and the attainment of national liberation and democracy for the people’s benefit, especially the toiling masses, can solve the problems of the poor. **AB**

Middle East. Accordingly, the ACSA shall allow prepositioning, a tactic of US imperialism that involves the stockpiling of military equipment near countries it considers “unfriendly”. This shall transform the Philippines into one big storage area for US military equipment, including nuclear weapons.

The ACSA would have been ratified through an executive agreement. But such plans were withdrawn in 1986 due to the vigorous opposition of patriotic sectors, including some senators critical of the agreement. Along with this, US imperialism suspended the conduct of large-scale military exercises in the Philippines.

The US-Ramos regime pretended that it was against ACSA and similar agreements to steer clear of the people’s opposition. Behind the scenes, however, the regime actively campaigned for the approval of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) that would grant immunity to US military forces within the country. In 1999, the senate ratified the Visiting Forces

Agreement (the name had merely been changed) as directed by the US-Estrada regime. This was clearly in preparation for the US military forces to base themselves once again in the country through the ACSA. This is the only reason the country would enter into an extraterritorial agreement despite the absence of US military bases in the Philippines.

US imperialism and its puppets have yet to ratify the ACSA, but this has not prevented US military forces from freely entering and leaving the country. Despite the absence of an ACSA between the two countries, previous treaties (Mutual Defense Treaty, Access Agreement of 1993 and the VFA of 1999) guaranteed this. Though limited in scope, the Philippines has been continually providing services to US military forces. In 1993, even before the ACSA was exposed to the public, several US warships had docked at Subic for supplies and repair. In 1997, during then US President Clinton’s “visit” to the Philippines, former president Ramos admitted that

the Philippines had been “extending services” to US military forces and that the US had been providing some military equipment to the Philippines.

Likewise, after the VFA was

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signed, the US and the Philippines resumed conducting successive joint military exercises or “Joint Combined Exchange Training” (JCET). The JCET is an important component of the US’ belligerent policy that supports the policy of imperialist “globalization”. The Special Forces within the US military comprise the main US military units involved in these “trainings”. Under the guise of such “trainings”, these special units occupy themselves with gathering strategic information, from topography, the history of local leaders, the evaluation of the capability of armed forces, potential landing sites and others. Likewise, they directly train local “counter-insurgency” units and conduct intelligence operations against the revolutionary movement. Among them was the unit to which belonged the American troops ambushed by the NPA in Pampanga in June. In actuality, these “trainings” are part of the continued efforts by US imperialism to strengthen its military capability in different parts of the world.

**D**espite existing arrangements, it remains important for US imperialism to have an ACSA with the Philippines. The Asia-Pacific, its markets

#### **AS PROOF OF DIRECT INTERVENTION BY US IMPERIALISM**

**in** operations against the revolutionary movement, the New People’s Army in Southern Tagalog recently discovered the arrival in Mamburao, Oriental Mindoro of US Army representative Lt. Col. Jano Weintraub and his assistant Maj. Joe Fletaer.

The two representatives arrived on May 30 at the Mamburao airport aboard a C-12 plane. The PNP high command immediately issued orders directing the police to orient the Americans on the “peace and order” situation in the Mamburao PNP’s area of responsibility. Likewise, the local police were also ordered to provide them all the necessary transport assistance and security services.

As a demonstration for the benefit of the visiting US Army officials, the local police was also directed to:

1. expand its intelligence network through the Barangay Information Network and the assignment of at least two agents to the following: areas of operation of the New People’s Army, areas adjacent to municipal and Provincial Mobile Group police stations and all national, provincial and municipal roads; and
2. launch education and security orientation among the police.



# Push for the punishment of the Estradas, the Marcoses and others guilty of grave crimes against the people!

**W**ith the way the cases filed against the Marcoses, Estradas and others who have serious accountabilities to the people are going, the people see no clear basis to repose their trust in the existing reactionary justice system in the country. The people's doubts are growing and settling in with the passage of time, on whether the reactionary justice system is at all able to obtain justice for the people, especially in these cases where the defendants happen to be the most powerful within the ruling class.

FIFTEEN YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE MARCOS DICTATORSHIP was ousted. The people and history's unequivocal verdict that the Marcoses were responsible for numerous heinous fascist crimes and the unbridled plunder of the nation's coffers thundered in the first mass uprising at EDSA. But no one among the Marcoses and their minions has been punished by the reactionary state for such crimes. The reactionary justice system has even allowed the Marcoses and their cronies to strut around and be restored to power.

Aside from a few confiscated pieces of property of the Marcoses and their cronies, most of their ill-gotten wealth is safely stashed away in foreign banks and dummy corporations. The people have never laid hands on even a single centavo of this wealth estimated at \$13 billion.

On the other hand, millions of victims of fascist violence and oppression under the dictatorship continue to be deprived of justice. Even the simple matter of indemnification already won in a human rights case filed against the

Marcoses in a Hawaiian court by some 10,000 former political prisoners during the dictatorship, has not been implemented.

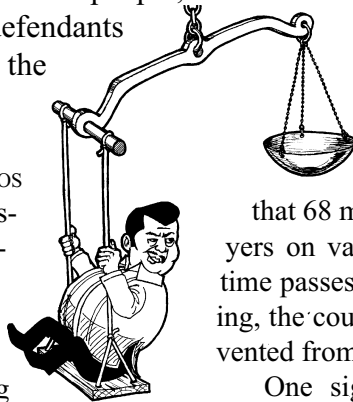
WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING WITH RESPECT TO THE ESTRADAS' trial, it would not be farfetched for them to return to power.

The Estradas are moving heaven and earth to weaken and undermine their prosecution in any way they can. Their lawyers have been seizing on each and every loophole and opportunity permitted by the reactionary laws and justice system to get the Estradas off the hook.

Even before the start of the trial, no less that 68 motions had already been filed by Estrada's lawyers on various matters, and this number is growing as time passes. With all these motions they have been dumping, the court is effectively bogged down and the trial prevented from progressing.

One significant motion they have won before the Supreme Court bars the use of Estrada's bank records as evidence in the plunder case against him, supposedly because of the Bank Secrecy Law. It is highly absurd that Estrada's bank records which have been opened and presented before the people and used in the impeachment trial, could no longer be used as evidence in the plunder case, when this is the same case endorsed to the Sandiganbayan by the aborted impeachment court.

Likewise, the Sandiganbayan ordered the prosecution in the third week of July to limit the list of Estrada-owned corporations to those already stipulated in the charge sheet. Thus, the Ombudsman is barred from presenting as evidence the Estradas' illegal investments in more than 60 other companies. ►



and resources are strategic to the US. Accordingly, the US has been endeavoring to place the region under its strict control. It has deployed more than 100,000 troops in the region to control the sea lanes used to transport its goods and ensure that the US could freely access the region's markets and

strategic resources such as energy.

The US views the region as a potential arena of military conflict, especially in the face of China's economic ambitions. Thus, in recent years, the US has deployed more attack submarines to the Asia-Pacific, has focused more war games and strategic

research projects here and has put more stress on expanding its military strength in the region. Two of the things it wants to ensure are the maintenance of its military bases in North Asia (Japan and Korea) and the flexible basing of its forces in Southeast Asia. **AB**

# Educational system continues to deteriorate under the US-Macapagal-Arroyo regime

Six months after tens of thousands of youth and students participated in ousting the corrupt and antipeople Estrada, no positive steps have been taken by the current administration to address their grievances. There has been no change in the condition of students under the US-Macapagal-Arroyo regime other than the fact that their burdens now weigh heavier on them.

In the face of higher prices of petroleum products, basic commodities, water services and other family expenses, students and their

parents now have more to burdens to bear. This latest school opening, more than 400 private colleges and universities nationwide raised their tuition fees. In Mindanao, about 26 government colleges and universities raised their fees by an average of 15%.

On May 23, the Board of Regents of the University of the Philippines (UP) approved a hike in tuition and other fees in UP Manila, UP College Baguio, UP Visayas and 20 out of 25 colleges in UP Diliman. Thirteen colleges in UP Diliman raised graduate tuition fees from P300 to P500 per unit, four colleges from P300 to P600 and one college from P300 to

P700. Laboratory courses at the College of Science that cost only P300 per unit in 1997 now cost up to P1,500 per unit.

In Baguio City, a number of colleges and universities raised tuition and other fees by 5-10%. Many students from the city's private elementary schools transferred to public schools in the metropolis because of higher fees.

Higher school fees have also been due to the Education Act of 1982 that persist under the current regime. Under this law, there are no restrictions in tuition fee hikes. This has led to a 2,000% increase in tuition since the law was enacted by the dictator Marcos. Despite the hardships ►



◀ Such depraved decisions by the Supreme Court and Sandiganbayan will cover up the Estradas' anomalies and ill-gotten wealth. These are major blows that would work against the conduct of a fair trial of the plunder case against them.

It is likewise the aim of the Estradas' tactics to let the case drag on for as long as they can, hoping that they could return to power in the 2004 elections, or seize power through extralegal means such as a coup d'état or an "EDSA 3"-style upheaval even before 2004. At every opportunity, they portray Estrada as a "martyr" and victim of "oppression" to stir up sympathy from their loyalists and others, the better to use them anew as cannon fodder in another destabilization attempt.

The fascist demon, warlord, corrupt politician and ex-Col. Rodolfo Aguinaldo was also able to circumvent the inutile reactionary justice system for almost 30 years. This June, it was the revolutionary movement that was finally able to mete out justice for his many blood debts. In many more cases, especially in the countryside, it is only the revolutionary movement that has been able to address the people's demands for justice.

Although their cases are prominent, it is not only the slow progress and faltering manner of pursuing the cases

of Marcos, Estrada and others who have committed grave transgressions against the people that indicate the corruption, inutility and pro-elite character of the justice system obtaining in the country. This is daily being validated by the people through their own experiences. The people could hardly utilize the reactionary courts to defend and advance their interests. The exploitative and oppressive classes have decisive control over the reactionary courts and the entire system of administering justice in the country and in fact, are able to use them to further exploit, suppress and oppress ordinary folk, especially the poor who have no resources to spend to pursue justice.

There is need for the progressive and democratic forces and the people to demand justice in the cases of the Marcoses, Estradas and others who have serious accountabilities to the people. This is likewise necessary to obtain concessions, however slight and temporary, for the advancement of the people's interests.

At the same time, it must be made known that the issue of attaining justice in the country can only be decisively resolved through the victory of the people's democratic revolution, in expunging the old and decadent system and putting a new and revolutionary system of justice in the hands of the revolutionary forces and the people. **AB**

◀ wrought by the higher cost of education, the only form of relief repeatedly proposed by Congress is the imposition of a 15% ceiling on tuition fees paid by students in their first year in college.

Officials of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) themselves admit that there is a dearth of 16,214 classrooms, 142 million textbooks and 29,000 teachers. In spite of this, the regime has paid more attention to swelling the budget of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). This July, on the occasion of the AFP's anniversary, Macapagal-Arroyo announced that she would be giving the military P10 billion for its "modernization". Debt service and corruption are the other items that gobble up the budget of the reactionary government.

In 1997, the reactionary government allotted P12 billion from a World Bank loan to fund the construction of 2,000 classrooms annually. But in 1998, only two classrooms had been built and only 200 more in the first half of this year.

On January 23, when Macapagal-Arroyo had just taken power, students, through the National Union of Students of the Philippines, aired four demands. These were 1) a halt to tuition fee hikes, 2) advancement of students' democratic rights, 3) augmenting subsidies for education, and 4) the unconditional release of student political prisoners. The regime has not addressed these demands.

With renewed hikes in school fees and inadequate government subsidies, criticism, opposition and protests have rained down on the US-Macapagal-Arroyo regime. To this, the Commission on Higher Education has rudely retorted that if students wanted quality education, they had to pay for it.

Students have formed an alliance called Education for All. During Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address on July 23, they joined widespread protests in front of Congress to reiterate their demands.

Students have long been battling the decadent educational system. Instead of a commercialized, feudal, pro-imperialist and elitist education, they are fighting for free, scientific, patriotic and mass-oriented education. So long as there are no basic changes in society, the youth will remain oppressed and their right to education curtailed. ■

## Youth and students against ROTC

# Unity against an ever burdensome, corrupt and anomaly-ridden program

Student protests against the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) gained momentum under Macapagal-Arroyo's term and exploded in July. The students called for the abolition of the decadent, anomaly-ridden, ever burdensome and fascist program.

The ROTC is a four-semester or two-year weekly compulsory "military training" course for male college students. It is integrated into their course curricula and is a requisite for graduation.

It was in 1922 when the US first implemented ROTC as optional military training at the University of the Philippines. In 1939, through an executive order, Manuel L. Quezon transformed this to compulsory training for all males.

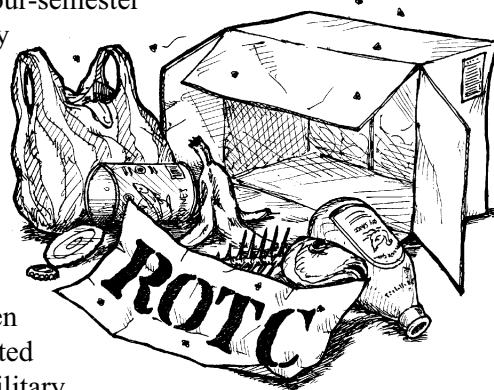
From its onset, ROTC was never meant to serve the Filipino people's interests. It was integrated into the very first law passed by the country's Commonwealth government, Commonwealth Act No. 1 (National Defense Act). This was drafted by the US to prepare for the threat of the Second World War. The US wanted to use the Filipino youth as cannon fodder in its impending inter-imperialist war.

### FASCIST MACHINERY, CORRUPTION-RIDDEN

Students and their parents have posted various complaints against ROTC.

Corruption is widespread within. It is used as a milking cow by many commandants and military officers. Uniforms and other ROTC equipment are often sold at prices higher than their true cost. There are also cases where snacks are forcibly sold to cadets during training.

There are officials who amass huge amounts in bribes from those who would like to skirt the course or from those ▶



unable to undergo training, such as the handicapped. There are cases where the handicapped are exempted only upon payment of up to thousands of pesos.

Parents of students who take the course are further weighed down by expenses for ROTC. In the face of ever spiralling school fees, the overpriced ROTC expenses are an added burden.

The persistence of ROTC militarizes schools. It generates fascist culture. On March 16 this year, ROTC officials abducted Mark Welson Chua, a 19-year-old student of the University of Sto. Tomas (UST). His body was found floating in the Pasig River. Chua, himself an ROTC official, had exposed its anomalies. His brutal murder shows the extent of fascism and the inroads made by syndicates within the ROTC.

Through the law, men who undergo compulsory military training under ROTC have been made extensions of the reactionary military's fascist machinery. The reactionary armed forces use this reserve corps to spy against progressive student organizations on campus.

In the face of widespread protests by ROTC cadets and their supporters, the AFP adamantly insists on retaining this corrupt and anomaly-ridden program. It contends that ROTC is needed allegedly to train the youth to defend the country. The course allegedly needs only to be reformed. In reality, the AFP has merely been looking for a rationale for its continuance.

The AFP has also been propagating an anticommunist smear campaign against student organizations vehemently against the ROTC. This worn-out tactic of the reactionary armed forces is being carried out to intimidate other students and their parents from joining protests. There have also been cases where cadets participating in mass actions were beaten up and harassed.

### CONCERTED ACTION

Students have declared that they would continue advancing the fight they have begun until the ROTC is abolished.

They have formalized their unity through an alliance, Abolish! (Network for the Abolition of ROTC) composed of Anakbayan, League of Filipino Students, Student Christian Movement of the Philippines, National Union of Students of the Philippines, College Editors Guild of the Philippines and student councils and publications. Abolish! launched on July 9 its campaign to gather one million signatures against the ROTC that they later presented to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo during

her State of the Nation Address (SONA) at the opening of Congress on July 23.

Cadets and their supporters staged successive walkouts, barricades and pickets in various areas of the country.

On July 1, about a thousand students in Metro Manila walked out of training and marched to Mendiola. Hundreds of UST cadets boycotted their training amid tight security. They burned a pair of ROTC uniforms to symbolize their protest.

On July 8, up to 400 cadets from the Ateneo de Manila staged a walkout. In UP College Baguio, 130 cadets walked out on July 14. They marched along Session Road and called on cadets from other schools in the city to join the protest.

On July 15, thousands of students in Metro Manila once more joined coordinated protest actions. Up to

THE PERSISTENCE OF  
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7,000 students set up barricades at the University of the East-Calocan, Adamson University,

Arellano University and the Technological University of the Philippines. Five hundred cadets picketed at the Far Eastern University. In Tacloban City, 200 cadets walked out of training at the Leyte Institute of Technology along with students from UP-Tacloban and Leyte State University.

Up to 300 students walked out of UP Los Baños on July 21. On the eve of Macapagal-Arroyo's SONA, hundreds of students once more joined boycotts. Instead of merely leaving their training fields, they cleaned up the streets of España, Bonifacio Circle in Calocan and Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City to demonstrate that there were things more relevant than ROTC. In Mindanao, students from the University of Mindanao, Ateneo de Davao University, University of Southeastern Philippines, Holy Cross of Davao College and San Pedro College joined walkouts.

The unity of students nationwide against the ever burdensome ROTC is a fine thing. The students must continue to struggle against ROTC to reduce state-imposed burdens on them and their parents. Alongside this struggle is the struggle against other burdens such as the incessant hikes in tuition and other fees that merely reflect the more prevalent hardships imposed by the decadent system coddled by every regime. **AB**



### **1 SERGEANT, 2 CAFGU<sup>s</sup> DIE IN COMPOSTELA VALLEY AMBUSH**

A Philippine Army sergeant and two elements of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit were killed in an ambush by Red fighters in Barangay Anibungan, Maco, Compostela Valley on July 14. They belonged to a composite team of the 60<sup>th</sup> IB and were on combat patrol when ambushed.

### **1 SOLDIER KILLED IN NPA AMBUSH IN AGUSAN SUR**

A soldier was killed and two others were wounded after their unit was ambushed by New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas in Barangay Kinambukayang, San Luis, Agusan del Sur on July 18. The ambushed soldiers belonged to the Philippine Army's 36<sup>th</sup> IB assigned to protect Tecland Inc., which plans to set up an *Acacia mangium* plantation in the area despite opposition from the Banwaon tribespeople. The jungle to be cleared by Tecland Inc. is part of the Banwaon's ancestral land.

### **PUNITIVE OPERATIONS LAUNCHED IN CAMARINES NORTE AND BATANGAS**

The NPA punished Smart Communications Inc. by bombing its cell site in Cabangbang, Daet, Camarines Norte on July 25.

Prior to this, the NPA also punished JG Summit Petro Chemicals on July 6 by burning two air-conditioned buses owned by the company. The punitive action was conducted in Barangay Sinloc, Batangas City. The Red fighters first told the passengers to get off the bus and stay at a distance before pouring gasoline on the vehicles and setting them on fire.

Both companies were punished for their refusal to abide by the revolutionary movement's policies on taxation.

### **AETAS IN PAMPANGA PUSH FOR PULLOUT OF ABUSIVE MILITARY UNIT**

Aeta tribespeople staged several pickets at the Pampanga provincial capitol in the first two weeks of July to demand the pullout from their barangay of the abusive 24<sup>th</sup> IB. Led by the Central Luzon Aeta Association, residents of Barangay Nabuklod in Floridablanca condemned the military's abduction of two community leaders, Barangay Captain Angel Binuran and Barangay Councilman Nelson Mallari. The two leaders have been missing since the latter part of June.

The tribespeople complained about the soldiers' incessant harassment, searches, drinking bouts, discharge of firearms and abuse of women. Barangay Nabuklod, which lies along the Pampanga-Bataan-Zambales border, has been repeatedly targetted by military operations of the 24<sup>th</sup> IB since December 1999.

### **PROTEST ACTIONS LAUNCHED ON MACAPAGAL-ARROYO'S SONA**

Up to 20,000 people from militant organizations joined protest actions against Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 23. Among those who participated were BAYAN, Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Gabriela, Kadamay, Anakbayan, League of Filipino Students, Promotion of Church People's Rights, Kairos Philippines, Plunder Watch, Courage, Migrante, Health Alliance for Democracy, UP-Cure, Ugat Lahi, Kilusang Agham, League of Concerned Professionals, Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace, ProGay, Youth Movement for Justice and Meaningful Change, members of the erstwhile Estrada Resign Movement and delegations from Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon. Abolish! and other student organizations also organized a widespread boycott of the ROTC in order to join the rally.

Rallies were also launched in the cities of Baguio, Angeles, Lucena, Bacolod, Dumaguete, Iloilo, Cebu, Tagbilaran, Gen. Santos and Davao and in the province of Aklan.

The demonstrators demanded that Estrada be put on trial for plunder. They also opposed the policy of imperialist "globalization", deregulation and privatization that the Macapagal-Arroyo regime has merely perpetuated. They likewise assailed the continued rise in human rights violations and intensifying militarization in the countryside under the new regime. And they also pushed for the immediate implementation of the people's demands such as the P125 across-the-board increase in the daily wage of workers.

A "Gloria from the box" was prepared for the rally by Ugat Lahi, a progressive artists' group. From the box first emerged an effigy of Macapagal-Arroyo portraying her adherence to the interests of the ruling classes, big foreign and local businessmen and the military. The box also yielded an Estrada effigy that demonstrated the continuing need to demand the prosecution of his plunder case; a crocodile that symbolized imperialist "globalization" and profit-hungry privatization; a vulture portraying the refusal



to grant the P125-increase in workers' wages and other immediate forms of relief in the people's livelihood; and a rabid dog that symbolized the continued violations of human rights and the absence of peace in the country.

The people swore in the three Bayan Muna representatives. They were unable to join in the opening of Congress because of the delayed issuance by the COMELEC of the decision regarding the legitimacy of groups that ran in the party list elections. In what was dubbed as the "People's Proclamation", Satur Ocampo, whose parents were peasants from Sta. Rita, Pampanga, clutched a bundle of *palay* to symbolize the peasant masses. Crispin Beltran of KMU held a hammer as a symbol of the masses of workers. And Liza Masa of Gabriela carried a purple banner as a symbol of the women's liberation movement.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

The Communist Party of the Philippines Information Bureau announces the relaunching of **Ka Roger Online**, the internet homepage of the bureau.

Through Ka Roger Online, the bureau aims to give members of the Party, revolutionary and democratic forces, mass media organizations and media personnel and the public at large, news from the revolutionary front. It will periodically issue statements, essays and primers clarifying the Party analysis of the most important and burning issues in the country and around the world. It will also publish general directives of the Party leadership.

Ka Roger Online may be accessed at <http://www.angbayan.org/pib/index.htm>.

## G8 SUMMIT ASSAILED IN MASSIVE PROTESTS

Some 200,000 demonstrators assailed the G8 Summit held on July 21-22 in Genoa, Italy. The G8 is a group composed of the eight most powerful imperialist countries in the world. Among them are the US, Germany, Japan, Canada, France, United Kingdom, Italy and Russia.

The protests in Genoa were the latest in a series of massive rallies launched against summits held by imperialist governments and agencies in various parts of the world the previous year. The demonstrations resisted the agenda of imperialist "globalization" being advanced and the added suffering this has brought on the world's peoples.

The rally was brutally attacked by the police. A demonstrator, 23-year-old Carlo Giuliani, was killed after being shot by a policeman. More than 230 were wounded in the bloody attack. Up to 280 persons were arrested.

The following day, the police also raided a school that served as the headquarters of the Genoa Social Forum, an umbrella organization of groups from various countries that joined the protests. Ninety-two persons were arrested in the raid. According to those arrested, they were made to lie flat on the floor and were truncheoned, kicked and beaten.

Tens of thousands rallied on July 24 in Rome, Genoa, Florence, Bologna, Palermo and other Italian cities to condemn the police's brutality. Up to 40,000 protested in Rome. In Genoa itself, up to 10,000 joined the protests.

In Athens, Greece, about 800 demonstrators rallied in front of the Italian embassy to condemn the killing of Giuliani. A demonstrator was wounded and three were arrested when police clashed with a group of rallyists.

The rallies condemned the reported violence and denial of due process to those arrested in the rally and in the school. According to reports, those arrested were not permitted to consult their lawyers or meet with their relatives. Foreigners who were among those arrested were likewise not allowed to see officials from their embassies.

Meanwhile, 500 persons joined the march in Genoa when Giuliani's remains were brought to the cemetery. Up to 1,000 attended his burial.

Due to intense protests, the Italian police has been forced to release most of those arrested, without charges. The Rightist Italian government has also been forced to order the investigation of the policeman who killed Giuliani. **AB**